Marathon County Workforce Profile

Job Growth 1994 to 1999

- O to 9.9%
- 10% to 19.9%
- 20% and over
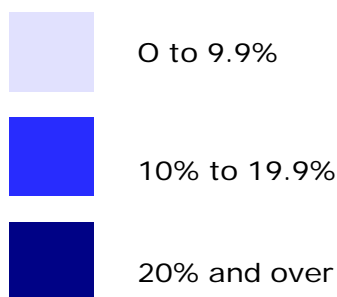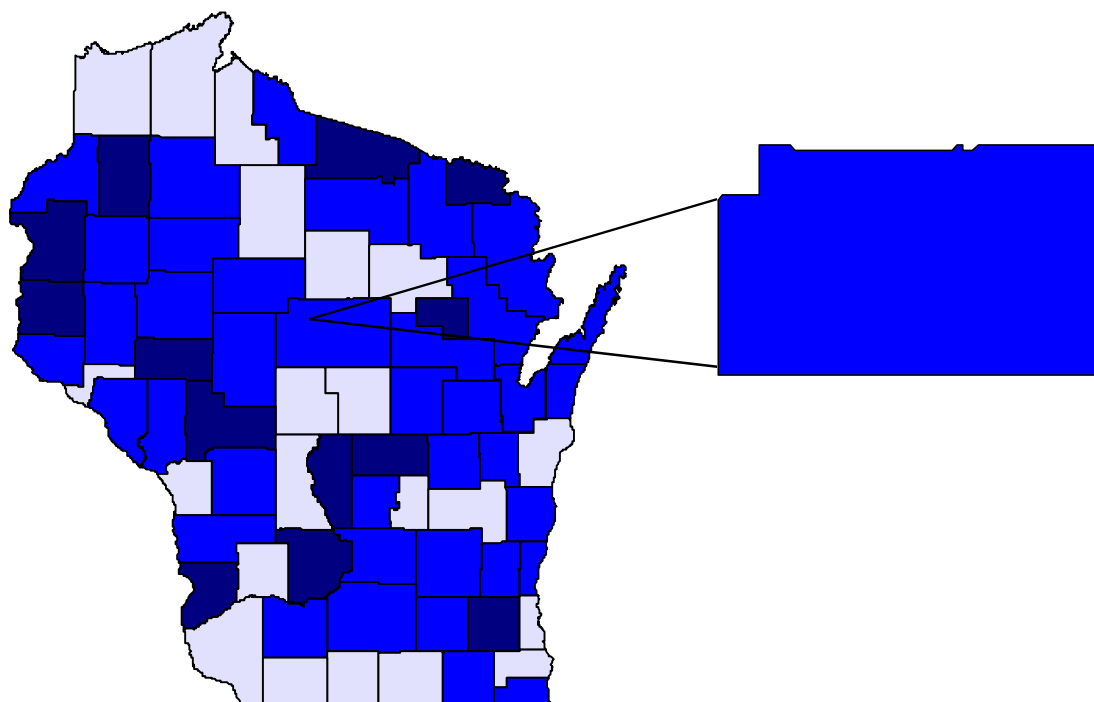
Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development
Division of Workforce Solutions
Bureau of Workforce Information
October 2001

State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

Introduction

The County Workforce Profile has been developed by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's (DWD) Bureau of Workforce Information (BWI) to provide a broad overview of Marathon County's labor market. The data included in this fourth year of publication is for 1999 to maintain consistency with the previous publications and to provide the user with a single year of reference in order to draw comparisons and form a picture of related labor force and employment information.
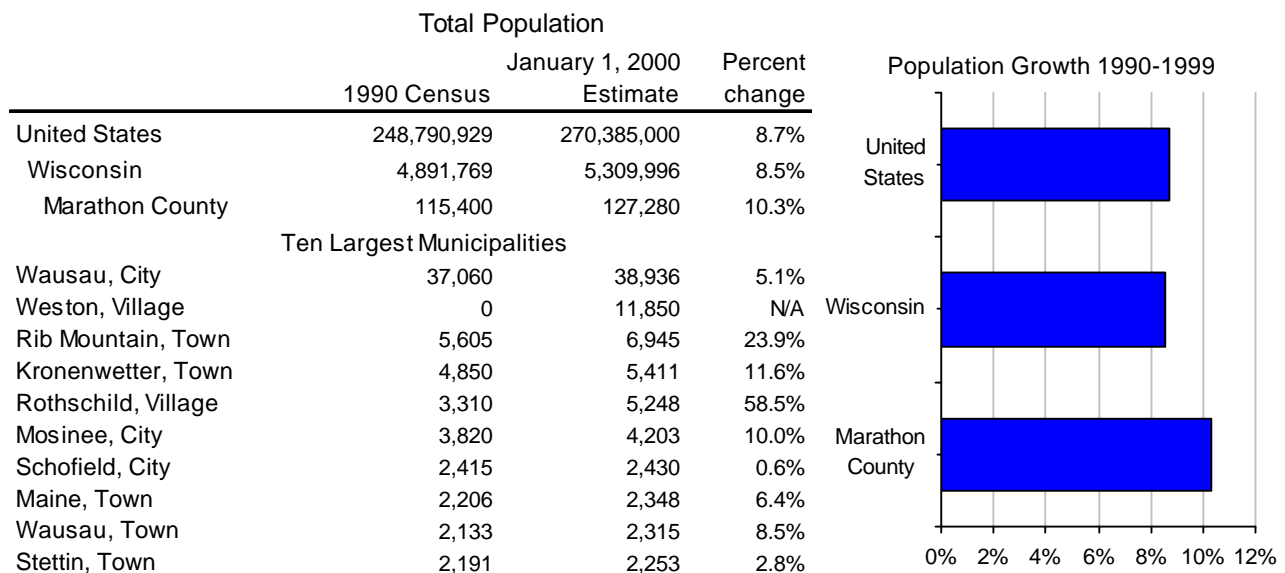
A variety of economic and demographic labor market information have been provided to describe the current labor market conditions in the counties and regions of Wisconsin. That information includes 1999 data on population, labor force, industries, employment, wages and income. The narrative describes how local conditions have changed over one-year and five-year intervals. Although population information is available from the 2000 census, it is not included in this publication since the period of time selected for all data sets is 1999. For more recent releases of information please consult the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Labor Market Information website: http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/lmi.

For more detailed information or clarification, please contact your local labor market analyst,
Dennis Goodwin, by telephone (715-261-7745) or email (goodwd@dwd.state.wi.us).

DWD is an equal opportunity service provider. If you need assistance to access services or material in an alternate format, please contact the analyst listed above.

Marathon County Population and Civilian Labor Force

Marathon County's population has increased over 10 percent during the 1990's. Marathon County has grown faster than either Wisconsin or the United States. The growth rate in Marathon County accelerated during the late 1980's. This faster growth rate in Marathon County is the result of more people moving into the county than moving out, probably as a result of the strong job picture there. This pattern reflects a large, positive net migration. Marathon County's population also increased by having more births than deaths. This component of population change is called natural gain. A stable industrial picture and a generally good economy have contributed more than anything else to the population growth of this area.
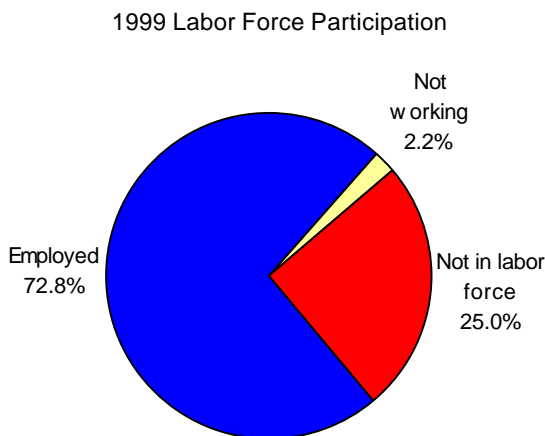
Total Population

	1990 Census	January 1, 2000 Estimate	Percent change
United States	248,790,929	270,385,000	8.7%
Wisconsin	4,891,769	5,309,996	8.5%
Marathon County	115,400	127,280	10.3%
Ten Largest Municipalities			
Wausau, City	37,060	38,936	5.1%
Weston, Village	0	11,850	N/A
Rib Mountain, Town	5,605	6,945	23.9%
Kronenwetter, Town	4,850	5,411	11.6%
Rothschild, Village	3,310	5,248	58.5%
Mosinee, City	3,820	4,203	10.0%
Schofield, City	2,415	2,430	0.6%
Maine, Town	2,206	2,348	6.4%
Wausau, Town	2,133	2,315	8.5%
Stettin, Town	2,191	2,253	2.8%

* Marathon County portion only

Source: WI Dept. of Admin., Demographic Services Center, *Official Population Estimates,* January 1, 2000

People who are not working includes people who are unemployed and people who are not in the labor force. Unemployed does not include all people who are not working, some people who are not working are not technically unemployed. Examples of people who are not working but who are not unemployed are retirees or people who choose not to work. In Marathon County, the fastest growing segment of the population is the 40 - 54 age group (about 41 percent), or those in their so-called prime earning years. Next are the retirement ages, those 55-64. This elder group will be leaving the labor force around and shortly after the turn of the century.

The term used to describe the relationship between the labor force and population is the participation rate. In Marathon County, about one-forth of the population is not in the labor force, or participating. Almost 73 percent are working (either full time or part time), with just over two percent unemployed. This is a decline from 1998 where this number stood at 76 percent. This means a participation rate for Marathon County of nearly 74 percent, compared to 67 percent for the US, and 72 percent for the state.

The nearly 42 percent increase in labor force aged population between the ages of 40 and 54 (between 1990 and 1999) is the result of the aging of baby-boomers. Of major significance to employers has been the slow growth in the number of younger workers. Slow growth in the number of 16-24 year olds, a decrease in the number of 25-39 year olds, and an increase in the number of businesses which traditionally hire large numbers of young workers has contributed to the current labor shortage. This shortage is felt keenly in a large county like Marathon, even with such a varied industrial picture.

1999 Labor Force Participation

Source: Estimated from WI Dept of Administration population estimates, Jan 2000, US Census Bureau, and Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Marathon County Labor Force Age Population Distribution

Age Group	Population		Percent change
	1990 Census	1999 Estimate	
0-15	29,131	30,454	4.5%
16-24	14,121	15,259	8.1%
25-39	28,424	26,799	-5.7%
40-54	19,674	27,879	41.7%
55-64	9,451	10,581	12.0%
65+	14,599	16,308	11.7%
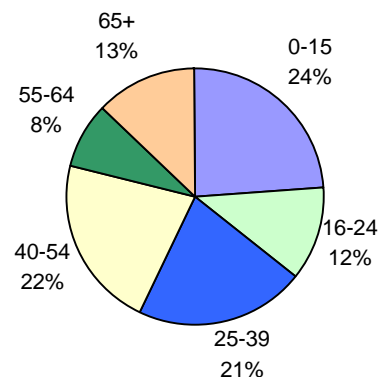
Source: Estimated from WI Dept of Admin, Demographic Services Center, *Official Population Projections 1990-2020* and US Census Bureau

Marathon County Civilian Labor Force Data

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Labor Force	68,800	69,800	71,700	73,200	73,400	71,900
Employed	65,100	66,700	68,900	70,500	70,800	69,800
Unemployed	3,750	3,130	2,790	2,720	2,600	2,110
Unemployment Rate	5.4%	4.5%	3.9%	3.7%	3.5%	2.9%

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Marathon County has been quite stable from year to year, with no serious fluctuations. In 1994, it was reported at 5.4 percent but by 1999, had declined to 2.9 percent. Historically, this is a very low rate of unemployment, even for a midsummer month.

One relative advantage of the Marathon County labor market is its stability. Although strong in paper, wood products and health care, no one industrial element dominates the scene, yet manufacturing plays an important enough role to keep working wages and income comfortably above the state average. This is due to the presence of several large paper mills in the area, as well as other businesses.

Unemployment Rate Comparison

◆ United States   ■ Wisconsin   ▲ Marathon County
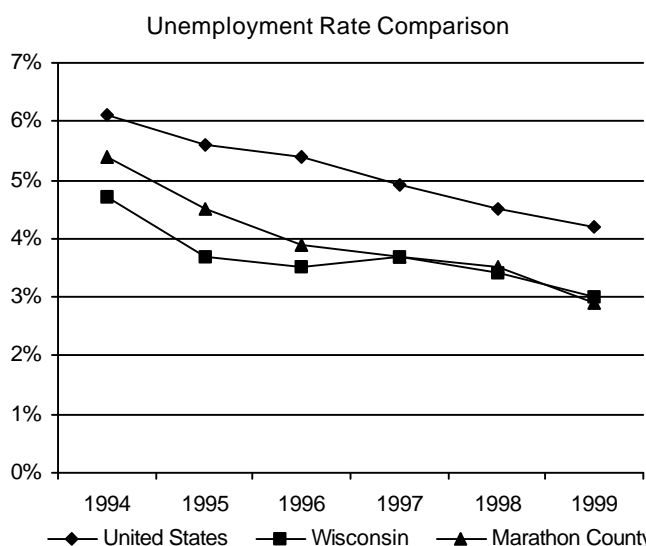
Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

(Note - Although these 1990 Census Commuting numbers have not yet been updated by the recent Census, we do not anticipate any significant changes in the general pattern of movement.)

In Marathon County, about 4,800 workers leave the county each day to work elsewhere, mainly in Wood County (about 3,100 making that trek). This is out of a total of about 51,000 employed within the county itself. By contrast, about 4,900 workers commute into Marathon County each day from neighboring areas to work, the largest number coming from Lincoln County to the north.

One can only speculate as to what kinds of jobs these workers are commuting to, or what their professions are. They are likely stable, permanent jobs, likely professional, or perhaps jobs in manufacturing in a neighboring county. Or, they may be the kinds of jobs that typically take a person some distance from his or her home, like seasonal construction work.

Marathon County Commuting Patterns

|	Commute Into	Commute From	Net Commute
Wood	3,131	685	-2,446
Portage	828	623	-205
Lincoln	705	1,730	1,025
Clark	496	1,101	605
Shawano	260	751	491
Total	5,420	4,890	-530

Work within Marathon County   51,440

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information. *Wisconsin's Commuting Patterns*, 1994.
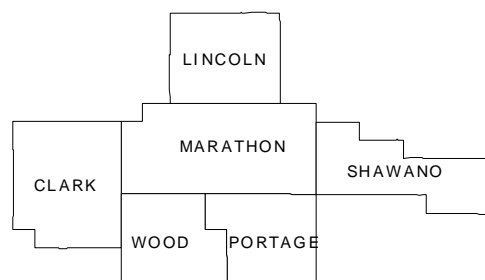
The large number of workers driving to Wood County appears strange, until we reflect that the city of Marshfield straddles the county line in north Wood County, and that this city is the site of a major medical facility, employing about 2,800 people. This undoubtedly accounts for a good deal of the Marathon-to-Wood daily commute.

Although 5,400 workers leaving the area each day may seem high for a central Wisconsin community, compared to the total number employed within the county, (about 52,000) it is not. The Metropolitan Statistical Area of Wausau, which includes all of Marathon County, keeps most of the total employed labor force close to home.

Marathon County Employment Change by Industry 1994 to 1999
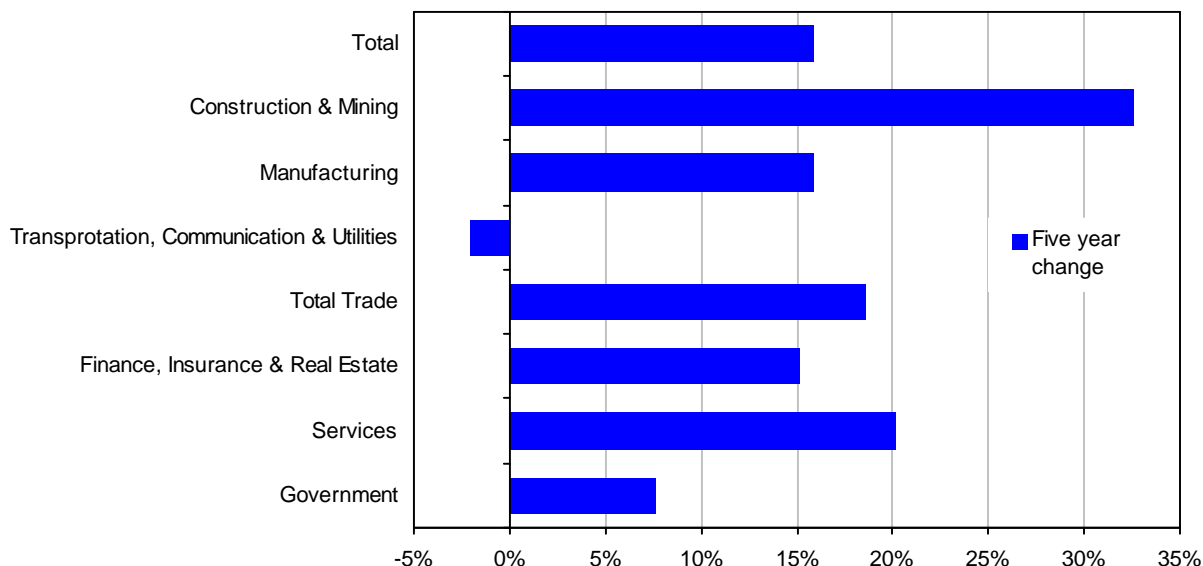
| | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | Percent change | |
							1 year	5 year
Total	58,885	60,621	61,806	64,380	66,192	68,255	3.1%	15.9%
Goods Producing	18,872	19,643	19,929	21,212	21,732	22,273	2.5%	18.0%
Construction & Mining	2,447	2,511	2,646	2,872	2,938	3,245	10.5%	32.6%
Manufacturing	16,424	17,132	17,284	18,340	18,794	19,027	1.2%	15.8%
Durable	11,139	11,995	12,080	13,097	13,568	13,718	1.1%	23.2%
Nondurable	5,285	5,137	5,204	5,243	5,226	5,309	1.6%	0.5%
Service Producing	40,013	40,978	41,876	43,168	44,460	45,982	3.4%	14.9%
Transportation, Communications & Utilities	3,583	3,547	3,434	3,333	3,381	3,508	3.7%	-2.1%
Total Trade	14,125	14,731	15,041	15,988	16,371	16,758	2.4%	18.6%
Wholesale	3,947	4,270	4,461	4,759	4,764	4,806	0.9%	21.8%
Retail	10,178	10,462	10,580	11,228	11,608	11,952	3.0%	17.4%
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	4,388	4,525	4,628	4,706	4,951	5,052	2.0%	15.1%
Services & Misc.	11,001	11,289	11,652	11,832	12,357	13,217	7.0%	20.1%
Total Government	6,917	6,885	7,122	7,310	7,400	7,447	0.6%	7.7%

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, Nonfarm Wage & Salary estimates.

Nonfarm wage and salary employment measures the number of jobs within a county excluding agricultural, military, and self-employed workers. This data measures the number of jobs within the county without consideration of where the job-holder lives. Thus, this information is often referred to as "place of work" data.

Several sectors of the Marathon County industrial landscape increased in the period of 1994 - 1999. Durable goods manufacturing grew by just over 23 percent, mainly in the building components industry as well as other businesses. Other businesses in the area also contributed to this growth, structural metals, pre-built housing, electric motors and others. Service producing industries, which are increasing nearly everywhere, have also gained ground in Marathon County, about 20 percent in the 1994-1999 period, much of this being perhaps medical occupations and business services. Trade (mainly wholesale trade) increased by a healthy 22 percent, fueled by the ongoing boom in the Rib Mountain area.

The general picture of the industrial landscape of Marathon County, like the neighboring counties of Wood and Portage, is one of the industrial expansion of the principle sectors at about the same rate, a characteristic this area has had for some time, and one which lends a good deal of stability to the business and commercial life of the region.

Marathon County's Largest Industries and Employers

Top 10 Industry Groups

Industry Group	March 2000		Numerical Change	
	Employers	Employment	1 Year	5 Years
Lumber And Wood Products	38	4,468	33	320
Health Services	140	4,395	39	-509
Educational Services	22	3,684	72	206
Fabricated Metal Products	33	3,642	115	365
Insurance Carriers	22	3,510	*	*
Eating And Drinking Places	197	3,335	50	-157
Miscellaneous Retail	116	2,936	489	1288
Paper And Allied Products	11	2,645	*	*
Wholesale Trade-Durable Goods	163	2,610	123	346
Industrial Machinery And Equipment	38	2,601	94	714

*data suppressed to maintain confidentiality

Top 10 Employers

Company	Product or Service	Size
Eastbay Inc	Wholesale Sporting Goods	1000+
Wausau Hospital Inc	Health Care	1000+
Wausau Service Corp	Wausau Insurance Companies	1000+
Wausau School District	Public Schools	1000+
Liberty Mutual Insurance Co	Insurance Carriers	1000+
Kolbe & Kolbe Millwork Co Inc	Woodwork	1000+
Fiskars Consumer Products Inc	Scissors	1000+
SNE Enterprises Inc	Millwork	1000+
Greenheck Fan Corp	Air Moving Equipment	1000+
Apogee Wausau Group Inc	Wausau Metals/Milco/Linetec	1000+

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information Bureau, ES-202 file tape, 1st quarter 1999 and LMI benchmark 2000.

Top Ten Employers Share of Nonfarm Employment

Top 10 Private 21%

All Others 79%
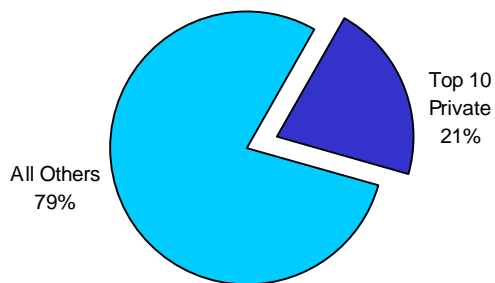
Top 10 Industry Groups Share of Nonfarm Employment

All Other Industries 50%

Top Ten Industries 50%
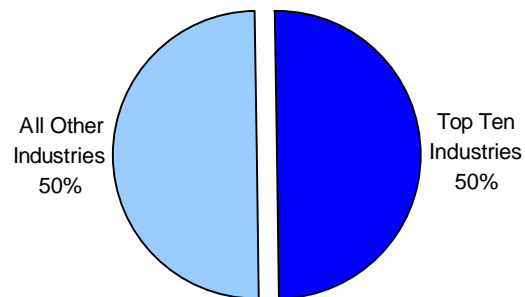
The backbone of the Marathon County industrial community is manufacturing. All of the top 10 private sector employers in Marathon County employ 1,000 or more people. Most of the jobs in those industries are high paying, permanent jobs, involved in the manufacture of building and construction components, paper, industrial equipment and other products.

The general manufacturing picture in Marathon County is solid, although there have been some plant shutdowns and relocations in years past. (Also troubling is the general condition of paper manufacturing in the area, which may have to respond to the world-wide over capacity in this industry). These occurrences appear to be only a small part of our present pattern, however, and dislocated employees have usually been absorbed by local industry.

Marathon County Employment and Wages 1999

	Annual Average Wage	State Average Wage	Percent of State Average	Percent change 1 year	5 year	Number of Workers
All Industries	$27,844	$29,609	94.0%	3.4%	19.4%	65,388
Agriculture, Forestry, & Fishing	$16,432	$21,499	76.4%	6.0%	23.0%	830
Mining	*	$39,968	*	*	*	*
Construction	$34,359	$36,772	93.4%	4.3%	22.3%	3,057
Manufacturing	$32,941	$37,773	87.2%	2.2%	18.0%	19,182
Transportation, Communications, & Utilities	$28,643	$34,523	83.0%	2.4%	16.1%	3,029
Wholesale Trade	$31,704	$38,048	83.3%	6.1%	22.5%	4,809
Retail Trade	$13,557	$15,066	90.0%	5.4%	15.6%	11,576
Finance, Insurance, & Real estate	$36,777	$37,911	97.0%	2.9%	23.2%	5,012
Services	$25,798	$26,041	99.1%	6.2%	21.0%	10,796
Total Government	$29,802	$32,017	93.1%	1.4%	16.2%	6,991

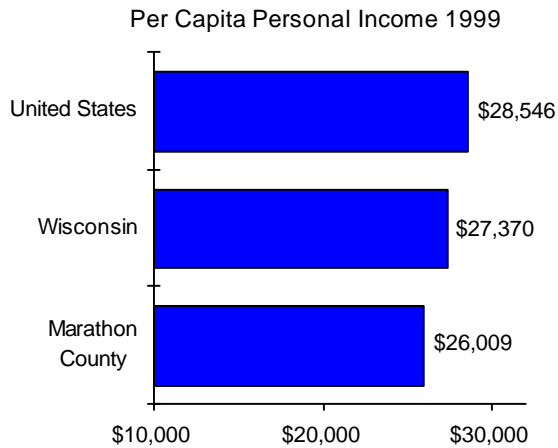Total Employment and Wage Distribution by Industry Division
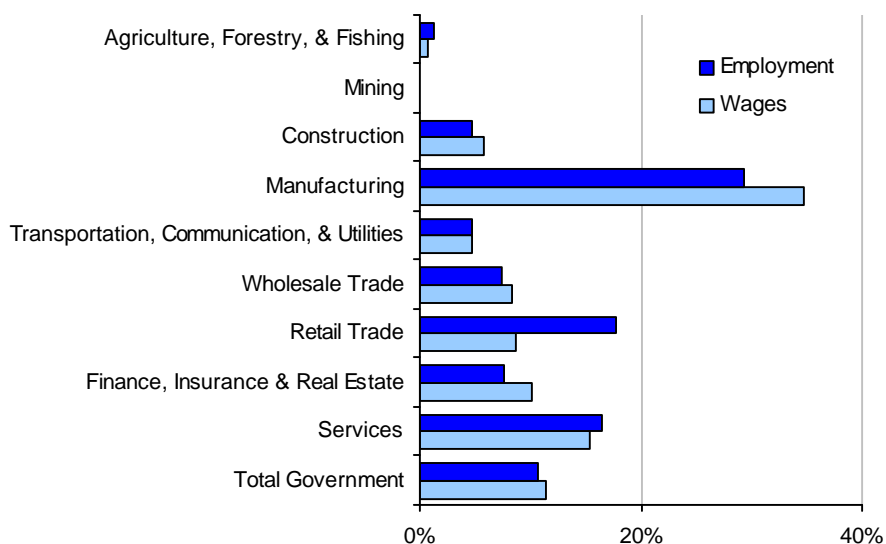
When one looks at the table at the top of the page, the one thing that seems to stand out is the forth column, indicating the percent of the state average wage paid in different industries in Marathon County. The wage levels in Marathon County compare very well to those paid workers across the state as a whole. This is not surprising, considering that manufacturing employment in the county represents such a high percentage of the whole.

Retail trade employment has had a good share of county employment, but earnings are a fraction of those in manufacturing, which is certainly not unique to Marathon County. The industrial element that even comes close to approaching manufacturing in average annual earnings is that of services, which includes many medical occupations. These occupations have increased in recent years and include many high paying professions. Also included in the service sector are the legal professions.

Several occupations in Marathon County are nearly as high paying as the state average, which rather sets it apart from neighboring areas. On the whole, the county average is just 6 percent below the state average level, compared to about 4 percent just two years ago. Service occupations are nearly at the state level, and most of the rest (except agriculture, forestry, and fishing) are in the high 90's. The pay levels in service are probably elevated by the medical and legal professions, as indicated above.

Marathon County Wage and Income Data

Per Capita Personal Income 1999

United States	$28,546
Wisconsin	$27,370
Marathon County	$26,009

(Bar chart axis: $10,000 $20,000 $30,000)

Comparison of Selected Data: 1994 - 1999

(Bar chart, axis 0% to 30%)
- Marathon County — Per Capita Personal Income (~28%)
- Marathon County — Average Annual Wage (~19%)
- United States — Consumer Price Index (~12%)

Per capita income is total income divided by the total number of residents. Income includes wages earned, dividends from investments, and transfer payments from the government. Marathon County's per capita income ranked 18th of Wisconsin's 72 counties during 1995. Per capita income can be influenced by the number of wage earners, average family size, and the median age of the residents. Per capita income can influence the type of services and housing available within a county.

Over the past five years, Marathon County per capita income has increased by about 28 percent and wages earned in Marathon County have increased by about 19 percent. Per capita personal income is usually much more volatile than wages.
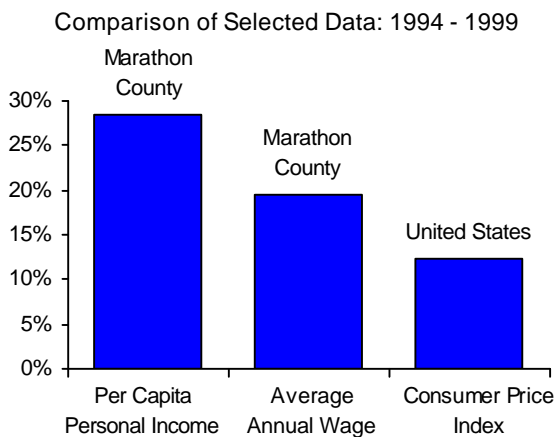
As suggested elsewhere, the three counties of Portage, Wood, and Marathon share thousands of workers each day, accounting for a great deal of income moving back and forth over county lines throughout the year.

Per Capita Personal Income

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	Percent Change 1 year	Percent Change 5 year
United States	$22,581	$23,562	$24,651	$25,874	$27,321	$28,546	4.5%	26.4%
Wisconsin	$21,699	$22,573	$23,554	$24,791	$26,227	$27,370	4.4%	26.1%
Marathon County	$20,261	$21,108	$22,318	$23,554	$24,859	$26,009	4.6%	28.4%

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System.

Selected Occupational Wage Data

	Mean	Median
Administrative Secretary	$13.20	$14.00
Assembler	$9.14	$8.63
Cooks, Short Order	$6.84	$6.46
Driver/Sales Workers	$10.29	$10.73
Janitors & Cleaners	$7.91	$7.30
Machine Feeders & Offbearers	$8.95	$8.44
Welders & Cutters	$12.99	$13.05
Computer Programmers	$20.48	$19.39
Construction Carpenter	$11.47	$11.15
Food Preparation Workers	$6.65	$6.14
General Office Clerk	$8.82	$8.59
Licensed Practical Nurse	$13.03	$12.94
Salesperson, Retail	$8.59	$6.88
Cashiers	$6.78	$6.37
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, etc.	$7.83	$7.75

Source: WI DWD, BWI. 1997 OES Wage Survey, Wausau, WI

Wages paid for work within a county can impact the type of goods and services which may be purchased. Examining wage structures can be an important part of the hiring process for both job seekers and employers. The mean wage is the sum of all wages divided by the number of wage earners; this is often referred to as an "average". The median wage is the midpoint of all wages; there are exactly the same number of wage earners above and below this wage. If the mean and median are relatively close the labor market for that particular worker is probably tight or very competitive. If the median is significantly below the mean, an employer offering mean wages should capture most of the market. Similarly, for workers in that occupation it will be difficult to find the job which pays the mean wage.